

"You know Derpy, I can't help but notice... you have a thing for unicorns." Lyra eased Derpy's body down into the steaming hot water of the large tub, a tub large enough for a kelpie to get comfortable in.

When her hooves hit the water, Derpy twitched, whipped her tail around, and then moaned as she was lowered into the hot bath. When her belly hit the water, she gasped a few times, closed her eyes, and allowed herself to sink into the tub.

"I mean... Dinky's father... then Bucky... and me." Lyra sat down on the tile floor beside the tub. "It strikes me as being a little weird, seeing as how Dinky's father hurt you."

The heat from the bathwater began to soak into Derpy's aching pelvis and she sighed. Her eyes now half open, she looked over at Lyra. She opened her mouth as if she was going to say something, but then closed her mouth a second later, her lips pursing together to form a puckered straight line of concentration.

"Come on... talk to me... please? You and I... we've... we've crossed the barrier and we've [i]done things[/i] with one another... and I don't feel right about being close to somepony unless I can talk to them... I need to know stuff, otherwise, I don't feel connected." Lyra's ears drooped down to the sides of her face.

"I want to tell you, I just don't know what to say. I don't know how to start. I don't want to keep this from you... it's just hard," Derpy said, trying to make Lyra feel better.

Lyra looked at the new bathroom door; Fancy doors, two doors that opened wide in the middle. She then looked at the collection of liquid soap bottles. Everypony had their own preference on what they liked to smell like, but sometimes somepony grabbed somepony else's soap just because they could, or because it smelled good. Her eyes lingered on Bucky's bottle of soap; lime with essence of bergamot. She closed her eyes for a moment and thought about how Bucky smelled, like ozone, like [i]Bucky[/i]. There were bottles of lavender soap, other floral scents, and fruity scents.

"There is just something about unicorns... the mystery... the magic." Derpy blinked and looked at Lyra. "I don't mean the big whizz bang magic, but the little things, the pretty things. Coloured lights and pretty sounds and it's all like fireworks. I like it."

"That's it? Pretty lights and crackle-pops?" Lyra looked at Derpy in disbelief. "Nothing powerful, just the simple stuff?"

"It doesn't need to be complicated, or powerful, it just needs to be pretty." Derpy smiled at the unicorn sitting beside the tub.

"I... don't know what to say." Lyra realised that her whole body was tensed, every muscle taut. She made herself calm down, took a deep breath, and tried to relax.

"I really hope that this doesn't make me sound superficial or shallow." Derpy looked over at the wall, puckered up her lips, made a popping sound, blinked, made another popping sound, and then stretched out her hind legs, kicking them out behind her in the tub. "There are times when you or Bucky and doing magic stuff and I get aroused—"

"Like when I pick you up in my telekinesis?" Lyra asked.

"Yep." Derpy took a deep breath and popped her lips again.

"I had no idea." Lyra rose to her hooves, stepped over the edge of the tub, and stuck one leg down into the hot bath water. She hissed as she felt the heat creeping into her flesh. She stuck her other leg down into the water, waited a moment, and then with a splash, she got her hind legs into the tub. "For you, it's pretty lights and sounds... for me, it's smells. Like... how Bon Bon smells like candy. I can stick my nose into her pelt and just smell her for hours. I love closing my eyes and just smelling the pony I'm with." Lyra flopped down into the water, got comfortable, and then eyed the soap bottles.

"Today I was thinking about the lavender and sage soap." Derpy turned her half opened eyes upon Lyra. "How does that sound to you?"

"That... that... that sounds really good," Lyra replied as she felt the muscles in her belly tensing again. That was [i]her soap.[/i] Lyra realised that Derpy wanted to smell like how she had been smelling. She had purchased the lavender and sage soap on a whim, not knowing if she would like it. It was hypoallergenic, and Thistle was fond of using it as well.

"Come a little closer," Derpy said in a low voice. "I don't bite... much... but I am known to nibble."

Lyra Heartstrings felt her lip quivering. "I know. About the nibbling I mean." She scooted a little closer to the grey mare, her heart now racing in her barrel. "The first time you did it, it scared me so bad... but it was so soft and gentle... and those little tugs. Once I realised you weren't going to hurt me and I relaxed, I liked it."

"Hi."

Lifting her head, Derpy peered over the edge of the tub with her good eye. She saw something pink. Unable to help herself, Derpy began to giggle when she looked at the foal sitting beside the tub.

"Felt love." Cadance reared up on her hind legs and balanced herself by placing her front hooves on the side of the tub.

"Yes, there, uh, was love here." Lyra took a deep breath and wondered how Cadance had entered the bathroom. The doors were still closed. It was a bit of a mystery.

"Bath?" Cadance asked. She blinked and gave the two mares in the tub a pleading look. "Cady want bath. Want love."

"Okay Cady-bug." Lyra lifted the foal in her telekinesis, paused, and wondered if the bath water was too hot. "Wait just a moment Cadance. Let mama cool the bathwater just a bit. We don't want boiled alicorn on the cob."

Giggling at Lyra's joke, Derpy watched as Cadance flapped her wings in eager anticipation. It was difficult to get most foals to take a bath, but it was far more difficult to keep Cadance [i]out[/i] out of the bath. She loved to swim around in the water like a little pink swan.

"You know, Cadance hasn't had a single accident in a long time. She took to potty training quick," Lyra said as she cooled the bath water just a bit. No more adult conversation. Lyra heaved a sigh. No making out in the tub. No wet kisses and splashing around. Now, Lyra didn't know what to say or to talk about.

"Boats?" Cadance asked. "Tooty toot!"

"I'll get your boats, Cadance, they're under the sink," Lyra replied.

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"Greetings Grisabella, I'm up here!"

The grey hunter griffoness cocked her head and looked upwards. The windmill was looking as though it was in a somewhat better state of repair since the last time she had visited.

"How is your mate... Weaver, right?"

At the mention of Weaver's name, the hunter griffoness' crest rose and all of her feathers fluffed out. She felt a hot flustered feeling under her feathers and the chill in the air vanished. There was a loud thump overhead. Grisabella's claws tapped upon the floor. "Weaver is fine. He is designing a new kind of loom."

"That's great! New innovations are always good!"

More thumps happened overhead, and Grisabella caught a glimpse of orange as Flash Sentry became visible for a moment. "Do you require assistance?"

"No... no, I got this." There was a pause. "Hey, your badge arrived. You are now officially part of the Ponyville Police Department and Emergency Rescue Response. Canterlot has given you clearance... you and I are going to be partners while I train you, and Thunderlane will also be doing some of your training."

Leaping upwards, Grisabella ran up a wooden support beam, her claws finding grip upon the wood. She sprang away from the support, landed upon the second floor support beam that still lacked a floor, and watched as Flash Sentry worked to patch a giant hole in the wall.

"You should ask the little griffons to help you. They could have this place fixed in no time," Grisabella said to Flash.

"I bet they could, but the budget is tight. I don't think I could pay them a fair wage. And before you say anything, you know how Bucky is. He'll flip his lid if he thinks his little griffons are being taken advantage of." Flash Sentry set down his hammer and then sat down on the wooden beam that would someday once again hold up a floor. Maybe. "I have no idea what I'm doing. I think I've made a mess of this."

"Hmm." Grisabella looked around, eyeing the mess. With a swipe of her talons, she impaled a giant spider on her one of her claws and then stuffed it into her beak, still wiggling. She swallowed and looked at Flash Sentry. "I will speak with Princess Apple Bloom. Perhaps she can help us."

"But... but I don't want to keep asking for help. I don't want the police force to look incompetent." Flash Sentry shook his head, disgusted from watching the spider become an hors d'oeuvre. "Public opinion is still very divided about us." He wondered what the social etiquette was about telling a griffoness that she had a spider's leg hanging out of her beak and waving. Flash Sentry wondered if the spider was waving for help. It looked like it was waving for help. He saw Grisabella's beak open and then the spider leg vanished as her tongue swept it away.

"Thank you, by the way, for the job. I can't be a soldier anymore. I promised Weaver when I took him as my mate that I was done with war. I don't know of any other way to make a living. I think I'll like this job though." Grisabella looked at the orange pegasus. "It means a lot to me that you trust me with the safety of the town and that you trust your ponies to my care."

"I'm very happy to have you with us..."

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With a roar that sounded like an avalanche, Bucky summoned more cold and breathed out a devastating blast of ice. Over fifty feet tall and with his body now made of ice, Bucky unleashed his fury upon his enemies. He ignored the bullets chipping away at his body, he ignored the fiery blasts from his enemies. More ice grew in the places where he took damage. In the back of his mind, he knew that there would be consequences for his actions later, he remembered Sparkler's battered body after she had reformed herself from stone after the fight with the demon.

Now a titanic ice elemental, Bucky obliterated his foes. He stomped down one hoof upon the bare rock of the mountain. Ice traveled from his hoof, up the rock, up the mountain, and then the unicorns firing spells at him were impaled upon sharp spikes of ice. Their bodies twitched as they died. Their end was not quick, nor was it clean. Opening his icicle fanged maw, Bucky blasted another group of enemy pegasi that were foolish enough to keep trying to fight him, flying up and kicking him, chipping away pieces of his icy body. They froze solid and plummeted down, crashing into the stone of the mountain and shattering into a thousand pieces.

Lumbering forward into the enemy ranks, Bucky went after his remaining foes. Thousands had died from his fury. Some of his attacks killed hundreds in one go. Overhead, Myrmidons and griffon riders picked off dangerous targets and those trying to flee.

Bucky let out another roar, a blizzard erupting from his maw. There was only rage now, endless rage. A group of fleeing unicorns were frozen in place. Lifting his massive hoof made of ice, Bucky stomped down upon them, shattering them into tiny pieces.

Not far away, a group of Myrmidons did a bombing run. Spell jars fell like rain. Everywhere the bombs landed there were blooms of fire, arcs of lightning, and mayhem was unleashed as 'hate it kill it' spells overtook the enemy's minds.

Enemy pegasi were gunned down and the stuttering clatter of gunfire echoed between the mountains. Some of the buried unicorns had emerged from the snow and had joined the battle, while others were working on freeing their buried comrades.

Bucky did another stomp. Living ice shot forwards, running seeking out deserving enemies, and spikes of ice impaled dozens and dozens of foes, skewering them, the freezing shards impaling them, creeping through their bodies, freezing them from within.

The screams of the enemy filled the mountain pass. Blood trickled down like rain and fallen bloodied pegasi dropped like gruesome hailstones. None of the mirror travelers were prepared to fight an entropic ice elemental and now, the Lord of Winter's cold was claiming their lives one by one. There was no fleeing, no escape, there was only death in the high mountain pass. Cold, freezing death.

Drawing even more ice into himself, Bucky grew ever larger...

